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difficult to say which mode of descent is followed," in the system of Balap in South-West Ambrim, though similarly divided into six sections, it appeared to him that the matrilineal moieties were "absent, or only slightly developed." [1] This is an overstatement probably due to the fact that this was the first class system he met with and that, as in some Australian systems, these moieties, though they exist, appear not to be named.[2] Nevertheless the fact remains that the patrilineal element is here more in evidence than in North Ambrim, and this emphasis is undoubtedly due to the proximity of South-West Ambrim to the predominately patrilineal island of Malekula, whence this increased patrilineal influence has undoubtedly come in such a manner that, without destroying the 6-section system, it has here given it a new aspect by its insistence on overt patrilineal descent.

Added to this is the fact that in both Ambrim systems certain kinship terms are said by the natives to be "not straight," [3] by which is meant that these terms are applied to members of more than one kinship section, showing that the natives themselves clearly recognise that the system is already in process of dissolution, due almost certainly to the influence of the non-class patrilineal organisation encroaching from the south.

Similar Changes in Progress on Atchin

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Similar changes are in progress also in the Small Islands, where, for example on Atchin, one dominant patrilineal descent group has, during the past eight generations at least, been responsible for one innovation derived from the Malekulan mainland after another, in matters not only of ritual, as described elsewhere in this book, but also of kinship. At the time of my visit to that island, one of the main causes of domestic upheaval was the insistence of the dominant patrilocal village of Ruruar that the custom of marriage with the deceased father's father's wife, still practised on Vao and in the other patrilocal villages on Atchin owing to the action of the matrilineal moieties, should cease. This gradual innovation, illustrated by genealogical evidence as well as by accounts of the resulting domestic quarrels, leading at times to civil war within the group, will be fully dealt with in a future volume on Atchin.

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[1] Deacon, 2, p. 333.

[2] That Deacon did not himself at that time fully understand the implications of this system is shown by his irregular numbering of the two "lines" or matrilineal moieties within each patrilineal descent group. Thus, instead of using the same number to designate a given matrilineal moiety throughout the Balap system, he represented one matrilineal moiety as consisting of A^1, B^2, C^3, and the other of A^2, B^1, C^1. This error was rectified in his description of the Ranon system, in which, as already seen, the two moieties are labelled A^1, B^1, C^1 and A^2, B^2, C^2.

[3] Compare the similar phrase used on Vao where only the organisation of Pete-hul is said to be "straight," being founded by Ta-ghar, and that the social organisation on the rest of the island is not "straight," having been founded by "mere man" (p. 154).

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CHAPTER VI

KINSHIP

II

VAO

178 HAVING examined the main lines on which class systems are built up, and particularly those of Ambrim, I propose now, using the same technique, to examine the evidence which I recorded on Vao. This consists of:

(*a*) The facts already given regarding the overt organisation of the island, together with certain marriage regulations.
(*b*) The terminology of kinship.

Owing to the briefness of my stay on Vao, and other factors already mentioned, I was unable at that time to understand the significance of much that is contained in these records, and in particular to reconcile certain aspects of the kinship terminology with the overt organisation.

On re-examining them in the light of later knowledge, however, it began to appear that owing to recent changes in culture the kinship terminology had not kept abreast of actuality, and probably represents an archaic system based on overt matrilineal descent such as clearly existed till comparatively recent times in the Small Islands; this having within the last few hundred years been greatly modified by the introduced patrilocal organisation which we have already seen to be operating in Ambrim, and of which the story of Na-va-gharu-kalat and his brothers probably represents the introduction into Vao.

Judging not only from the recent date at which this introduction took place, but also from the geographical position of the island and from the largely matrilineal character of many of its rites,[1] it is almost certain that Vao is one of the latest places to have succumbed to this patrilocal influence, of which it is now the most northerly outpost. It is therefore not surprising to find that many features of the kinship terminology show a far closer resemblance to those of the matrilineal area to the north than to those of the patrilocal area immediately to the south. Most noticeable of these is the Vao use of the word *sogon* (1st person singular *soguk*)[2] for a group of relatives including the mother's brother and sister's son, which

[1] Particularly the mortuary rites, see Chapter XXI.
[2] See p. 131.

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is equivalent to the Banks Islands (Mota) *sogoi* used for the members of a man's own matrilineal moiety. As opposed to this, however, the overt social organisation of Vao is, as we have seen, now patrilocal.

This being the case, we have the interesting phenomenon of a kinship terminology based on overt matrilineal descent surviving in an area that is now overtly patrilocal, thus affording a rare opportunity for the study of change arising from this circumstance. This chapter consists of an attempt to trace the course of this change by, in the first place, determining the type of system that gave rise to the terminology and, in the second place, discovering as far as possible the mechanism by means of which this system was transformed into the existing organisation based on the patrilocal clans described in Chapter III.

I

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

(Recorded from Ma-taru, belonging to the refugee community of Tolamp, with the aid of the genealogy given in Table X, in which will be found all relatives mentioned by name in the text.)

Te (term of address)
Tete
Temak [1] terms of reference } F, FB, MSisH.

These are the terms for father, father's brother and mother's sister's husband. *Te* is used in address. Its reduplication, *tete*, is the usual familiar term of reference. A man will say "*tete e me Togh-vanu*," "my father comes from *Togh-vanu*." *Tete* has no possessive suffix, from which it will be seen that it was probably in the first place, like *te*, a term of address. In cases of great stress, however, the possessive pronoun *nanuk* may be added. Thus, on the death of a man's father, the son may cry out "*tete nanuk*," "my father." [2]

Temak carries the possessive suffix, declined in the usual way, *-k*, representing the 1st person singular. This term is used in ordinary conversation if the relationship is to be emphasised, or in speaking to a stranger. Thus, if a stranger asks a man "Who is this?" he will reply with the term "*temak*," "my father."

The reciprocal term is *natuk*, "child."

Mbembe (term of address)
Mbambeahu
Tinak [3] terms of reference } M, MSis; FSis; MBW, FBW.

[1] Takes the suffixed possessive pronoun. In all cases in this list, terms taking this suffix will be given in the 1st person singular.

[2] Godefroy says that the term *tete* is applied to what he terms the "legal" father, i.e. the mother's brother, and that the real father is more often addressed by name (see p. 180).

[3] Takes the suffixed possessive pronoun.

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the first syllable of the North Ambrim word *batutun*, meaning "matrilineal moiety," and the word *vatu* in the phrase *tosan na-vatu*, meaning "Side of the Stone." However this may be, the cumulative evidence points strongly to the presumption that these "Sides" all at one time represented matrilineal moieties or sub-divisions of such, even if they do not do so today, and that it is this fact that accounts for the automatic appearance of the divisions they represent. If this is so, then the same must apply to the "Sides of the Island." In this case there is no question of these being matrilineal now, since they represent very definitely the two main patrilineal divisions into which each Small Island is divided. Nevertheless, the attitude of almost permanent hostility and suspicion between these two "Sides" despite their close interrelatedness corresponds so very closely with that reigning between the two matrilineal moieties throughout the Banks Islands and Northern New Hebrides that it is to my mind more than probable that they also were in the first place matrilineal divisions, and that their present patrilocal character is yet another result of the social revolution due to the incursion of the patrilineal immigrants under the leadership of Na-va-gharu-kalat.

CONCLUSION

CHANGING NATURE OF ISLAND SYSTEMS

I have now sketched, from a combined study of the kinship terminology, the overt social organisation, the mythology and oral tradition of the natives, the probable course of development of the kinship system of Vao. It will be the task of future field-work to test the results. The system covers a larger area than the single island of Vao, since marriages also occur with the inhabitants of Atchin, Wala and other Small Islands, as well as with those of the mainland of Malekula, all of whom at one time apparently formed part of the same system, though at the time of my visit all these were already in course of disruption and Vao only retained the chief characteristics of a class system. There are thus in these remaining Small Islands many cases of anomalous marriages, leading to frequent disagreement and sometimes to open hostility. These will be studied more closely in future volumes dealing with the culture of Atchin, where the system is already breaking up owing to new influences encroaching from the south.

Among a seafaring population such as that of these islands, no system can be entirely self-contained. The ever-changing nature of these island systems as compared with the comparative stability of those in land-bound Australia is seen from the fact that if the above analysis is even approximately correct, the patrilocal kinship system now existing on Vao began to take on its present form only nine generations ago, and that it took three

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generations for the system to become welded into a compact whole. This system has remained comparatively stable for some six generations at most. Even apart from the coming of the White Man, the system would not have lasted much longer; as it would have been bound to succumb sooner or later to the non-class patrilineal influence that is encroaching from the south.

APPROXIMATE DATING

With regard to the question of dates, nowadays, owing to the practice of the older men marrying more than one wife, the age at which a young man can marry is rarely under 20, more usually later. Though the rate of infant mortality is high, there is nevertheless evidence in the genealogies to show that families were large. The fact therefore that the population, so far as we know, before the arrival of the White Man was fairly stable, shows how great were the ravages wrought by periodic famines due chiefly to hurricanes, and to a less extent probably to war. We shall therefore not be far wrong if we assume a generation to cover about 30 years, which is the highest of the two figures usually used in reckoning dates in Polynesia.

On this computation, and assuming the boy Naturel (see Table II) to have been born about the year 1900, his first ancestor, To-rom-bambaru, nine [1] generations back, would have been born about the year 1630.[2] At the time of the foundation of Pete-hul, To-rom-bambaru and his elder brother Na-va-gharu-kalat were men in authority. If, therefore, we take their ages to have been then about 50, we arrive at the year 1680 as the approximate date at which the foundation took place.[3]

The genealogies which I recorded on Atchin go back considerably further, the youngest boy in the elder branch of the double-village of Ruruar on the Superior Side of Atchin being himself the 17th in the direct male line of descent from Iwas, the founder of that village.[4] This

[1] Omitting Kalo-won, whose place in the genealogy is doubtful. If he was in the direct line of ancestry, this and the following dates would have to be decreased by 30 years.

[2] Godefroy (1, 1933, p. 52) allows 30 to 35 years for a generation (three generations to a century), and has recorded one extra generation, on which basis he calculates that To-rom-bambaru would have been born about the year 1570.

[3] The only other record of extensive genealogies in Melanesia is that of the chiefly house of Sa'a, first recorded by Codrington (3, pp. 50 ff.) and subsequently by Ivens (1, Chap. V). This house was founded twelve generations ago, and it is interesting that the same historical configuration exists there as in Vao, for Codrington records that the founders were four brothers, whereas Ivens points out that the two younger "brothers" were not brothers, but two fighting men belonging to their retinue (p. 113). These two thus seem to correspond with the two "shadow brothers" of Vao tradition. Ivens records (pp. 110-11) one genealogy going back thirty-nine generations. It is to be noted that, just as the Vao system is an intrusive overtly patrilineal one imposed on a previous matrilineal organisation, so also the people of Sa'a, together with their neighbours on Malo, represent an immigrant patrilineal folk in an otherwise matrilineal archipelago.

[4] For details see future volume. Including the present generation and the maternal uncles of Iwas, mentioned below, the total number of generations included in the Ruruar genealogies is 19.

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the shore, and whose name, in spite of his sexual activities which they may not have known about, the missionaries subsequently adopted as a fitting translation for the word God.

(*b*) *Conditions in Atchin in* 1914

In considering the reaction of the people of Atchin to the coming of the white man it will be of use to bear one principle in mind. Anthropological research shows that culture contact, if it be not too uneven by reason of the too great predominance of one party over the other, is one of the prime causes of vitality and progress; that too great stability, on the other hand, almost always leads to decay. Although the nature of the contact between the whites and natives was one of overbearing disparity, and so was not conducive to progress, the situation was remarkably mitigated in Atchin by the existence of culture movements within the native system itself prior to the white man's advent. In the three islands of Vao, Atchin, and Wala, the phenomena both of progress and of decay were thus already at work. Among the many movements of culture occurring in Malekula within comparatively recent times, there arose some eight generations ago a new centre of diffusion at a spot on the Malekulan mainland opposite Wala. The new form of culture spread first to Wala, which, on the subsequent extinction of the mainland villages, became its classic home. Vao still remained the stronghold of the earlier form of culture previously common to all three islands. Atchin was a half-way house between the two, incessantly acquiring new rites from Wala and passing them on, through the slow methods of ceremonial purchase, to Vao. Both Wala, the classic home, and Vao, which at that time was only beginning to adopt the new rites and beliefs, were at the time of my visit comparatively stagnant, and the people of Atchin, being, through the constant changes that were taking place, looser in mind, were at the same time in all ways more progressive. This chance of history has, to my mind, been of no little importance in conditioning the type of reaction on the part of all three islands to the disturbing fact of the arrival of the whites, whom the Atchin people have withstood with much greater success than either of the other islands, and by whom they were consequently both more feared and more respected.

Mr. Harrisson has been good enough to say that a further contributing factor was the timely visit of the anthropologist at a moment of great stress in the history of Atchin, two months after a serious conflict with the government, which, under normal circumstances, might well have led to a punitive expedition. Whether this is the case I am not in a position to judge. It may however be worth stating that I was, so far as I know, at that time the only white man in the group (with the possible exception of Catholic missionaries) who was unarmed and who expressed appreciation for their culture. It would however in my opinion be untrue to say that this attitude of admiration did more than encourage them in a standpoint they had already taken up—a determination that at all hazards they must maintain their own cultural integrity, even to the point of settling their own disputes if possible without warfare in face of common danger.

One of the white man's great complaints against the natives has always been

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their quarrelsomeness among themselves. This characteristic is undeniable,[1] but was mitigated before the coming of the white man by the fact that, living in dense bush and being but poor shots with bows and arrows, the amount of life sacrificed in the course of their wars was very small. Wars would drag on for months without a death. With the advent of the shot-gun matters however suddenly changed. What had before been little more than semi-ritual quarrels assumed quite different dimensions, and the coastal peoples, who were the first to obtain firearms, slaughtered their enemies without mercy. The old rule that wars could not cease till the number of dead, rarely more than one or two, was equal on both sides (this alone showing its ritual nature) no longer held when these were multiplied by tens, and war then came to mean the extermination of entire villages. In this way the people of Atchin had themselves assisted in the complete extermination of entire mainland communities, so that where before the white man's arrival there were flourishing villages was now waste bush. In this way almost the entire population of the semi-coastal villages of north-east Malekula, as well as large sections of the population of Atchin itself, had been destroyed, so that the numbers even on this island had been reduced from what are said to have totalled something in the neighbourhood of 1000 to, at the time of my visit, 401. This had made the natives of Atchin think, and their constant cry was, contrary to the opinion of most white men, "How can we combine to save ourselves?"

One method they adopted was, after the expulsion of the last trader, to allow no alcohol on the island. Though passionately fond of drink when they could get it, they had seen enough of its effects and had themselves evolved such a strong public opinion on the subject that no drink was allowed on the island, though it is true that rare passing cutters reaped a brief reward from some of the younger men.

In matters concerning their own culture there was an increasing disapproval of sorcery. How far this was due to the influence of the white man it is difficult to say. It is however a fact that on all the small islands sorcerers, or suspected sorcerers, were finding life considerably less easy than formerly, as the number of refugee sorcerers on Atchin alone showed.

More important, more concrete than these however was their determination to rebuild and reinforce the best elements in their own culture through the performance, ever more magnificently, of the *Maki* rite. One man, almost alone of the decimated Atchin village of Emil Marur, who had spent years on white men's plantations and at the end had been tricked of all his earnings, was busy during the whole of my stay carving the ten images needed for the rite and by intensive garden work and the rearing of pigs and the re-learning of the details of ritual from the older men, preparing for its performance in order to rehabilitate his and his kinsmen's spiritual and, through them, material fortunes. This man was Mari, who, in the clash with the government mentioned above, was in danger of being taken to prison in Vila for an imagined offence.

A similar case was that of Mataru on Vao, this time an erstwhile convert,

[1] The element of fear, though considerable, was never so great in the island populations as among the Big Nambas, owing to the comparative safety afforded by the sea and the greater breadth of outlook gained through trade with other islands.

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who had returned to his own people and was busy reviving the fortunes of his village in the same way. These two men were among my best informants, since they themselves were conscious learners from the older men and, like all learners, the most capable of passing on their knowledge.

Nor were the people of Atchin averse to using such aspects of the white man's material culture as would seem to them to further their interests. Though stone tools were still used for gardening and shell tools for carving, some natives possessed knives, but such things were not common, and the degradation in plastic art which everywhere followed on their introduction had, at the time of my visit, only recently begun to show itself. It seemed, by the way, most curious to me that, with the tremendous labour of digging up hard ground with nothing better than hard-wood sticks, no white man had thought of introducing more efficient agricultural implements, but none such existed. The hard-earned white man's money obtained on distant plantations was used almost exclusively with two objects in view. One was the purchase of whaleboats to replace their former long-distance canoes in order to facilitate the trade in and exchange of pigs in other islands. The second, closely connected with it, had as its result the only real benefit conferred by the white man, indirectly and without his knowledge, on the native. When I arrived on Atchin I was surprised at the number of young men who spoke pidgin English. It was not till I had been some time on the island that the reason for this became apparent. One of the least desirable aspects of the social system in this and the neighbouring islands was polygamy which, since most of the older men had two wives, effectually prevented the younger men from marrying until a comparatively late age. Wives are bought with the most valuable currency known in Atchin, namely pigs. So the younger men seized the opportunity created by the system of indentured labour to sign on for three years, without, like other natives, running up debts at the trader's store, so that with the money thus earned they might, on their return, buy pigs with which to purchase wives. This wholly beneficial revolution in the social machinery was in full swing at the time of my visit, but Mr. Harrisson tells me, and this is one of the most interesting points of comparison between then and now, that the old men have now turned tables on the young, and by devaluing the pig in terms of women and increasing the bride-price from eight or nine pigs to fifty or sixty, have thus restored the old equilibrium, and incidentally, presumably, their own authority. When we reflect upon the fact that the young men twenty-two years ago are the older men now we have a useful sidelight on one of the mechanisms governing the rise and fall of revolutions.

Another effect of the increased wealth in pigs thus gained was the elimination of the lower grades from the *Maki* hierarchy. This process was not primarily due to the wealth so gained, but, like so many other changes in native custom, was very much accentuated by it. In all other parts of Malekula the *Maki*, as has already been pointed out, is a graded hierarchy in which the grades are taken by individuals, and the taking of them demands great expenditure of pigs and other forms of wealth, so that when a man has reached the highest grade called *Mal* he is a very great man and jealous of his distinction. The tendency in such districts was consequently to increase the number of pre-

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liminary grades in order to enhance the dignity of those few who had reached the highest rank. In Atchin, on the other hand, owing to the communal nature of the rite and the mutual help afforded by every member of the village community to every other member, a contrary process was at work, the lower grades being already in process of elimination before the arrival of the white man. With the acquisition of the new wealth this process became speeded up, with the result that by the time of my visit they had all disappeared, so that each and every man, youth, and male piccaninny on the island who was capable of sacrificing a pig belonged to the grade *Mal*, much to the chagrin of those in other communities who had taken a lifetime achieving it. Even the older men on Atchin felt somewhat abashed by the general levelling-up, and, in order to assert their own superiority, a new supernumerary grade had been invented, called *Mel-teg*, literally "The *Mal* who stays at home," referring to the vows of abstinence taken after the *Maki*. It is amusing and significant to note that, according to Mr. Harrisson, the young men have again asserted their equality and that now most men on Atchin possess the title *Mel-teg*, and apparently for the moment, in this respect at any rate, democracy has reasserted itself, for there is no record of any further supernumerary grade.

The younger generation of natives made use of the white man's coming not only in the direction of freeing themselves from the domination of the older men. With the acute dramatic sense which is the essence of their culture they had also made up to some extent for other deprivations which the white man had brought about by using both him and his inventions for the enhancement of their already rich ritual life. Pantomimic representations of various aspects of the white man's activities had been incorporated into the dramatic repertory of the *na-leng* plays and dances, muskets were used to heighten the effect of ritual combats during the sex-initiatory expedition to Omba, into the more serious initiation rites on Atchin, in which hoaxes are performed on the initiates, more than one white man's *tour de force* was incorporated, and many of the masks and images were made lurid by means of Reckett's blue.

It is however significant to note that, even in the case of such a wide departure from native tradition as the abandonment of the manufacture of their own long-distance canoes in favour of white men's whale-boats, the old consecration rites were still continued. At one such consecration rite at which I was present over sixty valuable tusked boars were sacrificed, and the supreme sacrifice was that of a bullock, obtained from a trader, for which all the complicated sacrificial ritual was performed; while in the pantomimic dances the skulls of a bullock and two goats were used as masks.

One final word as to the causes of depopulation. At the time of my visit the population was on the decline. Of physical causes the chief was, as has been seen, the introduction of the musket which turned comparatively harmless semi-ritual combats into lethal battles. Second to this, the introduction of diseases, mainly of dysentery, which wiped out whole families. As to the psychological causes put forward by Rivers and others but denied by Mr. Harrisson, all I am able to say quite definitely is that there was at that time a general belief among the older men and some of the young ones that the race was doomed. The old men remembered the day when native culture was the highest achievement of the human race as they conceived it. The appearance

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of the white man made this position untenable, and they could conceive no possible compromise. If the white man stayed they must die out, as had so many of their neighbours. Some of the young men also said, "What, if this be the case, is the use of rearing children?" and there is no doubt that among this section of the community abortions were common, as pedigrees bear out in the clear diminution of the number of births. There was however a third section of the community, the younger men who had never known the time before the white man came, who were already born into an atmosphere of inevitable compromise, for whom the glamour of the white man's superior material civilization was tempered with a shrewd sense of his weaknesses and some knowledge of how to deal with him. These were the men who were bent on rehabilitating Atchin culture, while at the same time incorporating into it such new elements as seemed not to conflict too greatly with it. One such was Lawak, then my chief friend and informant, now, according to Mr. Harrisson, the most influential man on the island, who had spent two years of his youth in the French penal settlement of Noumea, who was one of the few young men of my day to take to him two wives, and who, his first wife being sick, himself reared her baby son by feeding him on the juices of fruits; nor shall I ever forget his delight when the boy first began to run. I must confess that in 1914, while admiring their efforts, I had little hope in their ultimate success. Time has shown otherwise. The population has increased and is increasing now. It is to such men as Lawak who, through knowledge of the white man and how to deal with him, had hope in the future but at the same time preserved their independence of mind and love of their own culture, that the present increase in population and renaissance of culture is due.

The author is hoping to publish a detailed account of the social organization, religion, language, music, and sea-faring activities of the inhabitants of the small islands off the north-east coast of Malekula, in a series of volumes entitled, 'Stone Men of Malekula.' The first volume, dealing with the island of Vao, is to appear this autumn.

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